

What we claim is:-

1. A method of operating a communication device in a mobile communications network, the device operating using a protocol having a physical layer, a user layer and at least an RRC (radio resource control) layer and an RLC (radio link control) layer of a UMTS system, wherein the RRC layer is arranged to submit an SDU to the RLC layer for communication using the physical layer and thereupon to start a timer process in the RRC layer, the method comprising
 - in response to said timer process reaching a predetermined timeout value:
 - causing said RRC layer to resubmit said SDU to said RLC layer a predetermined number N of times, each time starting said timer process; and
 - in response to N further instances of said timer process reaching its timeout value, causing said RRC layer to submit to said RLC layer an error message indicative of an unrecoverable error in said RLC layer for emission in response thereto.
2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising setting an operating mode wherein an acknowledgement of successful reception of said SDU is awaited.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein $N=0$.
4. A method of operating a mobile communications network having at least one cell, said cell having at least one user communication device and at least one network control device for communicating with the or each user communication device, the or each user device operating using a protocol having a physical layer, a user layer and at least a RRC (radio resource control) layer and an RLC (radio link control) layer of a UMTS system, wherein the RRC layer is arranged to submit an SDU to the RLC layer for communication using the physical layer and thereupon to start a timer process, the method comprising
 - in response to said timer process reaching a predetermined timeout value:
 - causing said RRC layer to resubmit said SDU to said RLC layer a predetermined number N of times, each time starting said timer process;

and in response to N further instances of said timer process reaching its timeout value, causing said RRC layer to submit to said RLC layer a first message arranged to cause the network control device to emit for said user communication device a second message arranged to cause said user device to reconfigure to a determined state.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein said first message is a CELL UPDATE message and the second message is a CELL UPDATE CONFIRM message.

6. A method according to claim 4, further comprising setting an operating mode wherein an acknowledgement of successful reception of said SDU is awaited.

7. A method of operating a communication device in a mobile communications network, the device operating using a protocol having a physical layer, a user layer and at least an RRC (radio resource control) layer and RLC (radio link control) layer of a UMTS system, wherein the RRC layer is arranged to submit an SDU to the RLC layer for communication using the physical layer and thereupon to start a timer process, the method comprising:-

in response to said timer process reaching a predetermined timeout value:

causing said RRC layer to resubmit said SDU to said RLC layer a predetermined number N of times;

and in response to N further timeout signals, releasing connection between peer layers at the said device and the said network.

8. A method according to claim 7, further comprising setting an operating mode wherein an acknowledgement of successful reception of said SDU is awaited.

9. A method according to claim 7, wherein $N=0$.

10. A method of operating a user device in a mobile communications network, the device operating using a protocol having a physical layer, a user layer and at least an

RRC (radio resource control) layer and an RLC (radio link control) layer of a UMTS system, wherein the RRC layer is arranged to submit an SDU to the RLC layer for communication using the physical layer and thereupon to start a timer process, the method comprising

5 in response to said timer process reaching a predetermined timeout value:

 causing said RRC layer to resubmit said SDU to said RLC layer a predetermined number of times N and in response to N further timeout signals:

 when a specific condition arises, releasing the connection between peer layers at the said device and the said network; otherwise

10 submitting by said RRC layer to said RLC layer of a first message arranged to cause the network control device to emit for said user device a second message arranged to cause said user device to reconfigure to a determined state.

11. A method according to claim 10 wherein the condition arises when said SDU
15 is indicative of security configuration.

12. A method according to claim 10, further comprising setting an operating mode wherein an acknowledgement of successful reception of said SDU is awaited.

20 13. A method according to claim 10, wherein said first message is a CELL UPDATE message and the second message is a CELL UPDATE CONFIRM message.